

KEYBOARD WITH IMPROVED LATERAL REGION

ABSTRACT

A keyboard having an input region that provides a set of input elements designed to complement a separate pointing device such as a computer mouse. These input elements enable both the dominant and non-dominant hand to work easily together to perform various functions, which in turn, makes “consumption” and “composition” tasks more efficient. The input region may be spaced laterally from the alphanumeric or “QWERTY” section of the keyboard. The elements include a scrolling member, first and second groups of keys, and an application switching device. The scrolling member may take the form of a rotatable member. The rotatable member may have an asymmetric outer profile and/or be frustum-shaped. The first group of keys preferably includes a Back key and a Forward key. The first group of keys and the scrolling member make performing “consumption” tasks more efficient. The second group of keys preferably includes a Cut key, a Copy key, and a Paste key. The application switching device is preferably configured to provide a command, when actuated, to move between open applications. The application switching device may be independently-actuatable, and/or dedicated and labeled as an application switching device. Additionally, the application switching device may be movable for actuation in opposing directions. Exemplary embodiments of the application switching device include a toggle switch, a rotatable dial, a laterally slidable member, and one or two keys. The second group of keys, application switching device and the scrolling member make performing “composition” tasks more efficient.